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SENATE

REPORT
No. 98–95

AMENDING THE ACT OF OCTOBER 15, 1966 (80 STAT. 953; 20 U.S.C. 65a), RELATING TO THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION, SO AS TO AUTHORIZE ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS TO THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION FOR CARRYING OUT THE PURPOSES OF SAID ACT

MAY 16, 1983.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. MATHIAS, from the Committee on Rules and Administration, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany S. 840]

The Committee on Rules and Administration, to which was referred the bill (S. 840) to amend the Act of October 15, 1966 (80 Stat. 953; 20 U.S.C. 65a), relating to the National Museum of the Smithsonian Institution, so as to authorize additional appropriations to the Smithsonian Institution for carrying out the purposes of said Act, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon with an amendment and recommends that the bill as amended do pass.

PURPOSE

Under the National Museum Act of 1966 the Smithsonian Institution assists the museum community in studying museum problems and opportunities, training career museum employees, preparing and distributing museum publications, researching and contributing to museum techniques, and cooperating with other agencies of the Government of the United States which are concerned with museums. S. 840 as referred would extend the authorization of the National Museum Act through fiscal years 1984, 1985, and 1986. This authorization would be at the level of $786,000 for fiscal year 1984 and "such sums as may be necessary" for the two succeding fiscal years.

BACKGROUND

The National Museum Act exists to meet the needs of the national museum community for the training of skilled permanent staff and

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in training for the preservation of collections. Funds were first authorized for the Act in fiscal year 1968. No funds were appropriated, however, in fiscal years 1968, 1969, or 1970. In 1970, 1974 and 1977, the program was reauthorized, each time for three years. In 1980, the program was reauthorized for two years. Except for an authorization of $803,000 for fiscal year 1980, the authorization for the program has since its inception always stood at $1 million, but appropriations have never reached this level.

Appropriations for the following fiscal years have been: $600,000 for 1972, $798,000 for 1973, $901,000 for 1974, $802,000 for 1975, $769,000 for 1976, $280,000 for the transition quarter, $792,000 for 1977, $793,000 for 1978, $797,000 for 1979, $802,000 for 1980, $803,000 for 1981, $779,000 for 1982, and $785,000 for 1983.

The Act is the only Federally-supported program that has systematically concentrated on the vital needs of museum conservation with respect both to training and research in new techniques. From its inception, the administrators of the National Museum Act have been sensitive to duplicating the efforts of other Federal programs—the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities, the National Science Foundation, and, more recently, the Institute of Museum Services. By maintaining close liaison with members of the staffs of these organizations, duplication has been avoided.

The Act is administered by one person, under the supervision of the Assistant Secretary for Museum Programs. Funds are made available by grants and contracts to museums, professional associations, and individuals after review by the National Museum Act Advisory Council, appointed by this purpose by the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution. The membership of the Advisory Council encompasses the principal museum disciplines—art, science, and history—and is broadly representative of the various regions of the United States. The Council advises and assists in determining priorities and assessing the quality of programs seeking support under the Act. In making awards the Advisory Council has insisted that all proposals clearly demonstrate how the project will contribute to the upgrading of the quality and standards of the museum profession. In fiscal year 1981, 56 grants were approved, totaling $704,053. In fiscal year 1982, 53 grants were approved, totaling $676,360, and in fiscal year 1983, 60 grants were approved, totaling $687,750.

Committee Action

On April 20, 1983, the Committee on Rules and Administration held hearings on S. 840. Testimony was received from S. Dillon Ripley, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution. A supporting statement was received from Lawrence Reger, Director of the American Association of Museums.

Committee Findings

Since it was initially funded in 1971, the National Museum Act has contributed significantly to the upgrading of the quality and standards of the museum profession. Though the dollar amounts involved have been small, it has played a key role in assisting the profession to provide improved care for and to make better use of museum collections

and to deal more effectively with urgent new problems that have arisen as a result of increased public visitation and the need to reach new audiences. The National Museum Act has been particularly effective in fostering training through seminars, workshops, stipend support, and fellowships for museum professionals and trainees in a wide variety of fields, particularly conservation and should be reauthorized.

Committee Amendment

The Committee on Rules and Administration concurred with the fiscal year 1984 authorization request of $786,000, but the Committee amended the "such sums" language in the bill for fiscal years 1985 and 1986 with the specific amounts of $1 million for fiscal year 1985, 1986, 1987, and 1988.

Cost Estimate

Cost estimates were not received from the Congressional Budget Office in time for their inclusion in the Committee's report. Upon their receipt, the Committee shall report them to the Senate for publication in the Congressional Record.

Regulatory Impact Statement

In accordance with paragraph 11(b) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee on Rules and Administration does not consider that enactment of S. 840 would have any regulatory impact.

Changes in Existing Law

In accordance with paragraph 12 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, changes in existing law made by the bill S. 2390, as reported, are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets, new matter is printed in italic, existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

SECTION 65a OF TITLE 20, UNITED STATES CODE

§ 65a. Director of National Museum; duties; programs and studies; annual report to Congress; authorization of appropriations

(a) the Director of the National Museum under the direction of the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution shall—

(1) cooperate with museums and their professional organizations in a continuing study of museum problems and opportunities, both in the United States and abroad;

(2) prepare and carry out programs by grant, contract, or directly for training career employees in museum practices in cooperation with museums, their professional organizations, and institutions of higher education either at the Smithsonian Institution or at the cooperating museum, organization, or institutions;

(3) prepare and distribute significant museum publications;

(4) perform research on, and otherwise contribute to, the development of museum techniques;

(5) cooperate with departments and agencies of the Government of the United States operating, assisting, or otherwise concerned with museums; and

(6) report annually to the Congress on progress in these activities.

(b) There are hereby authorized to be appropriated to the Smithsonian Institution [$782,000 for fiscal year 1983, $1,000,000 for fiscal year 1984, and $1,000,000 for fiscal year 1985.] *$786,000 for fiscal year 1984, $1,000,000 for fiscal year 1985, $1,000,000 for fiscal year 1986, $1,000,000 for fiscal year 1987, and $1,000,000 for fiscal year 1988.*

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